

ART. X.—*Contributions towards a History of the Star-Showers of Former Times*; communicated by EDWARD C. HERRICK, Rec. Sec. of the Conn. Acad.

[Read before the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, April 28, 1840; and since revised.]

A FULL account of the showers of shooting stars which have visited our planet, would much enlarge our knowledge of the system of bodies from which we receive these brilliant strangers. But a mere catalogue even, of all these displays is too much to hope for, inasmuch as some of them have doubtless been concealed by clouds, and others witnessed only by barbarians. Of those which have been preserved by the historian, a complete collection cannot at present be made in this country, owing to the insufficiency of our means of historical inquiry. A large portion of the materials for the present paper was collected in a search which I made in 1837 and 1838, for the purpose of obtaining evidence of the annual occurrence in August of an unusual number of shooting stars. The publication of the paper has been delayed in the hope that it might be rendered less incomplete; but I have now concluded to offer it in its present state, trusting that those who have the opportunity, will supply its deficiencies and correct its errors.\*

(1.) 1768 *years before Christ*. "In the fiftieth year of the reign of the emperor Kié or Li-Koué, i. e. the year 1768 [before Christ] the Chinese saw stars falling:" [des étoiles tomber.]—*Cométographie par M. Pingré*, Paris, 1783, t. 1, p. 248, 4to.; quoted from the *Monarchiæ Sinicæ Synopsis Chronologica*, annexed to Vol. 2, of *Voyages de Mel. Thévenot*, Paris, 1696.

This statement is quite indefinite, and I cite it with some hesitation. The most probable meaning seems to be that a large number of shooting stars was seen; but it remains to be determined whether the original record warrants the construction here assumed.

(2.) 686 B. C. In the reign of the Emperor Le-wang, B. C. 686, "the stars disappeared, and meteors fell like rain."—*Medhurst's China*, London, 1838, Svo. App. No. 1, p. 570.

\* A partial list of the dates of these meteoric showers, was given in Vol. xxxiv, p. 182, and also in Vol. xxxv, p. 367.

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